

REMARKS/ ARGUMENTS

Claims 2-16 and 20 are pending in this application. Claims 1 and 17-19 have been cancelled.

Allowable Claims:

The Examiner has indicated that claims 13-16 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Claim 13 has been rewritten in independent form. Claims 14-16 depend from claim 13. Accordingly, claims 13-16 are now in condition for allowance. Applicants thank the Examiner for indicating that claims 13-16 are allowable.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §103:

A. Claims 1, 4-5, 10-12, and 18-19 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Applicant's admitted prior art (PAT) disclosed in paragraphs 3 and 4 of the specification and in view of Dereen et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 3,218,764). Claims 1, 18, and 19 have been canceled. Accordingly, rejection of claims 1, 18, and 19 is moot. Claims 4-5 and 10-12 have been amended to depend from claim 13, which the Examiner has indicated as allowable. Accordingly, claims 4-5 and 10-12 are now in condition for allowance. Withdrawal of the rejection of claims 4-5 and 10-12 is respectfully requested.

B. Claims 2-3 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Applicant's admitted prior art (PAT) disclosed in paragraphs 3 and 4 of the specification and in view of Dereen et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 3,218,764) as applied to claim 1 and in further view of Neidorf (U.S. Pat. No. 2,436,819). Claims 2 and 3 have been amended to depend from claim 13, which the Examiner has indicated as allowable. Accordingly, claims 2 and 3 are now in condition for allowance. Withdrawal of the rejection of claims 2-3 is respectfully requested.

C. Claims 1, 6-12, and 18-19 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Applicant's admitted prior art (PAT) disclosed in paragraphs 3 and 4 of the specification and in view of Dereich (U.S. Pat. No. 2,964,443). Claims 1, 18, and 19 have been

canceled. Accordingly, rejection of claims 1, 18, and 19 is moot. Claims 10-12 have been amended to depend from claim 13, which the Examiner has indicated as allowable. Accordingly, claims 10-12 are now in condition for allowance. Withdrawal of the rejection of claims 10-12 is respectfully requested. Reconsideration of rejection of claims 6-9 is respectfully requested.

Claim 6, as amended, recites a method of producing lenses which comprises assembling a plurality of glass rods having a desired length in side-by-side configuration into a single unit. The assembly process comprises arranging the glass rods in a row in between a mat such that the mat is peelable from the glass rods. The method further includes cutting the single unit into multiple slices, each slice comprising an array of glass rod pieces, finishing the slices to a desired thickness and surface finish, and extracting the glass rod pieces from the slices to produce a plurality of individual lenses.

PAT does not teach assembling a plurality of glass rods into a single unit. Dereich teaches placing fibers in between a first and a second plastic sheet and applying heat and pressure to the plastic sheets to cause the plastic sheets to flow around the fibers and fuse together into a single piece of plastic prior to cutting the assembly. This application of heat and pressure may result in slight flattening of the fibers (see col. 2, lines 66-67 of the Dereich patent), which is not desirable in the present invention. Further, it would be virtually impossible to peel the fused plastic sheet from the fibers without damaging the fibers. As taught by Dereich, "the object is to produce a cross-section of a textile fiber which may be kept permanently" (see col. 2, lines 14-17). In claim 6, the mat is neither a permanent encasement for the glass rods nor is it thermally-fused to the glass rods.

In view of the above, claim 6 is not obvious over PAT, whether considered singly or in combination with Dereich. Withdrawal of rejection of claim 6 is respectfully requested. Claims 7-9, being dependent on claim 6, are likewise patentable in view of the foregoing arguments.

New Claim:

New claim 20 recites that the glass rods assembled in claim 13 have gradient refractive index. Glass rods having gradient refractive index, as opposed to those having uniform refractive index, are needed for making GRIN lenses.

Conclusion:

The rejected claims have been amended and/or shown to be allowable over the prior art. Applicants believe that this paper is fully responsive to each and every ground of rejection cited by the Examiner in the Office Action dated December 5, 2003, and respectfully request that a timely Notice of Allowance be issued in this case.

Respectfully submitted,

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